

NEIGHBORHOOD INTERMODAL TRANSFER FACILITIES

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Intermodal transfer facilities remind most people of massive stations in large metropolitan cities that offer multiple transportation modes geared toward the business commuter. However, the concept of intermodalism should not be attached to size of facility or to location (i.e., that it should be downtown or in a large employment center).

OBJECTIVES

Researchers investigated existing small-scale transfer facilities, focusing on the interaction of transportation modes (e.g., bicycle, pedestrian, bus, park and ride). The sites were carefully selected based on several criteria such as whether the facilities (1) demonstrate a functional link between transit and community, (2) exhibit transferability, (3) promote partnerships, (4) demonstrate extraordinary public involvement, and (5) represent variable facility types. After selecting example sites, researchers conducted an evaluation of the facilities, which led to the identification of the minimum characteristics required for establishing intermodal transfer facilities in neighborhoods. Researchers also addressed the feasibility and implications of developing similar facilities in Florida.

FINDINGS

While the facility types varied, each of the presented facilities successfully provided mobility options to their respective communities. The facilities effectively integrated multiple modes in communities with varied socio-economic backgrounds and under different plans of action for involving the public.

The review of six example sites identified several patterns or similar characteristics. Each of the featured facilities paid significant attention to the safety and convenience of pedestrians, who usually make up the core user group for most intermodal transfer facilities. Safety was never compromised in attempts to increase intermodal integration. Instead, these facilities incorporated safety mechanisms that could be duplicated at other facilities, regardless of size or type, such as texture paving at crosswalks.

The developers of the example sites also let the needs of the community dictate the size and types of the intermodal facilities. Most of the communities that supported the facilities featured in this report had primary objectives related to (1) providing sufficient pedestrian and bicycle access, and (2) integrating those modes with transit. Park and ride facilities have also successfully met the needs of many communities, especially those distanced from the urban core. Three of the facilities described in this report integrated park and ride activities into their intermodal facilities.

Three of the featured facilities also had moderate to high pedestrian activity, creating a strong pedestrian base of support. Two of the facilities were located in communities whose populations contained a high proportion of persons who are transit-dependent. Another facility supported transit service in which the elderly made up nearly 70 percent of the ridership.

The example facilities also featured similar amenities that were instrumental in creating environments that encouraged multi-mode travel and made waiting more comfortable for the users. While funding may prohibit the construction of shelters at every bus stop in a transit system, the use of shelters is important at facilities designed to encourage passengers to transfer between modes. This assessment is especially true in Florida, where the waiting passengers may likely be exposed to inclement weather. Each of the facilities presented in this report paid attention to facility furnishings, such as seating, trash receptacles, and other amenities that may enhance effectiveness and attractiveness.

In addition to ensuring that intermodal interaction is safe and comfortable, the example facilities also shared common characteristics regarding the provision of reliable passenger information and service, integration of public involvement in the design and planning processes, and participation in private/public partnerships.

CONCLUSIONS

Seamless, intermodal transportation opportunities can exist in neighborhoods in various forms, including small intermodal local stops, park and ride lots, small-scale transit centers, and community rail stations. The case studies have demonstrated that, regardless of size or location, design and compatibility considerations, and community involvement play a significant role in the establishment of intermodal alternatives that are safe, convenient, and effective.

This research project was conducted by Laurel Land at the University of South Florida. For more information, contact Amy Datz at (850) 414-4239, amy.datz@dot.state.fl.us.